

455B.392 Liability for cleanup costs.

1. a. A person having control over a hazardous substance is strictly liable to the state or a political subdivision for all of the following:

(1) The reasonable cleanup costs incurred by the state or its political subdivisions or the agents of the state or a political subdivision as a result of the failure of the person to clean up a hazardous substance involved in a hazardous condition caused by that person.

(2) The reasonable costs incurred by the state or its political subdivisions or the agents of the state or a political subdivision to evacuate people from the area threatened by a hazardous condition caused by the person.

(3) The reasonable damages to the state for the injury to, destruction of, or loss of natural resources resulting from a hazardous condition caused by that person including the costs of assessing the injury, destruction, or loss.

(4) The excessive and extraordinary cost incurred by the state or its political subdivisions or the agents of the state or a political subdivision in responding at and to the scene of a hazardous condition caused by that person.

b. If the failure is willful, the person is liable for punitive damages not to exceed triple the cleanup costs incurred by the state or its political subdivisions or the agents of the state or a political subdivision. Prompt and good faith notification to the state or a political subdivision by the person having control over a hazardous substance that the person does not have the resources or managerial capability to begin or continue cleanup, or a good faith effort to clean up, relieves the person of liability for punitive damages, but not for actual cleanup costs.

c. Claims under [this subsection](#) shall be made by the state agency or the political subdivision that incurred costs or damages under [this subsection](#), and such costs or damages will be subject to administrative and judicial review, including the terms of [chapter 17A](#) when appropriate. If administrative or judicial review is sought, a political subdivision making a claim shall submit an advisory request to the department to determine whether the cleanup actions serving as the basis for the cleanup costs were consistent with [this chapter](#). The department shall respond in writing to a request within thirty days of receiving the request.

2. Liability under [subsection 1](#) is limited to the following maximum dollar limitations:

a. Five million dollars for any vehicle, boat, aircraft, pipeline, or other manner of conveyance which transports a hazardous substance.

b. Fifty million dollars for any facility generating, storing, or disposing of a hazardous substance.

3. There is no liability under [this section](#) for a person otherwise liable if the hazardous condition is solely resulting from one or more of the following:

a. An act of God.

b. An act of war.

c. (1) An act or omission of a third party if the person establishes both of the following:

(a) That taking into consideration the characteristics of the hazardous substance, the person otherwise liable exercised due care with respect to the hazardous substance.

(b) That the person otherwise liable took precautions against the foreseeable acts or omissions of the third party and the foreseeable consequences.

(2) As used in this paragraph, “third party” does not include an employee or agent of the person otherwise liable or a third party whose act or omission occurs directly or indirectly in connection with a contractual relationship with the person otherwise liable.

4. There is no liability under [this section](#) for a person otherwise liable if all of the following conditions exist:

a. The liability arises during the transportation of a hazardous substance.

b. The fact that the hazardous substance is a hazardous substance has been misrepresented to the person transporting the hazardous substance.

c. The person transporting the hazardous substance does not know or have reason to know that the misrepresentation has been made.

5. Money collected by the department pursuant to [this section](#) shall be deposited in the hazardous waste remedial fund created in [section 455B.423](#). Moneys shall be used in the manner permitted for the fund. Moneys collected by a state agency other than the department of natural resources pursuant to [this section](#) are appropriated to that agency for purposes of

reimbursing costs of the agency for emergency response activities described in [subsection 1](#). Moneys collected by a political subdivision pursuant to [this section](#) shall be retained by the political subdivision and shall be used for purposes of reimbursing costs of the political subdivision for emergency response activities described in [subsection 1](#).

6. [This section](#) does not deny any person any legal or equitable rights, remedies, or defenses or affect any legal relationship other than the legal relationship between the state or a political subdivision and a person having control over a hazardous substance pursuant to [subsection 1](#).

7. a. There is no liability under [this section](#) for a person who has satisfied the requirements of [section 455B.381, subsection 7](#), paragraph “b”, regardless of when that person acquired title or right to title to the hazardous condition site, except that a person otherwise exempt from liability under [this subsection](#) shall be liable to the state or a political subdivision for the lesser of:

(1) The total reasonable cleanup costs incurred by the state to clean up a hazardous substance at the hazardous condition site; or

(2) The amount representing the postcleanup fair market value of the property comprising the hazardous condition site.

b. Liability under [this subsection](#) shall only be imposed when the person holds title to the hazardous condition site at the time the state or a political subdivision incurs reasonable cleanup costs.

c. For purposes of [this subsection](#), “*postcleanup fair market value*” means the actual amount of consideration received by such person upon sale or transfer of the hazardous condition site which has been cleaned up by the state or a political subdivision to a bona fide purchaser for value.

d. Cleanup expenses incurred by the state or a political subdivision shall be a lien upon the real estate constituting the hazardous condition site, recordable and collectible in the same manner as provided for in [section 424.11, Code 2016](#), subject to the terms of [this subsection](#). The lien shall attach at the time the state or a political subdivision incurs expenses to clean up the hazardous condition site. The lien shall be valid as against subsequent mortgagees, purchasers, or judgment creditors, for value and without notice of the lien, only when a notice of the lien is filed with the recorder of the county in which the property is located. Upon payment by the person to the state or a political subdivision, of the amount specified in [this subsection](#), the state or a political subdivision shall release the lien. If no lien has been recorded at the time the person sells or transfers the property, then the person shall not be liable for any cleanup costs incurred by the state or a political subdivision.

[84 Acts, ch 1108, §4; 86 Acts, ch 1158, §2, 3; 86 Acts, ch 1245, §1899; 93 Acts, ch 42, §3; 94 Acts, ch 1157, §1, 2; 2009 Acts, ch 16, §3; 2016 Acts, ch 1105, §4, 15](#)

Referred to in [§455B.391, §459.506, §481A.151](#)

2016 amendment takes effect December 31, 2016; 2016 Acts, ch 1105, §15

Subsection 7, paragraph d amended